

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 903

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

USDEL JEC PARIS

AEMEMBASSY SAIGON 559

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

S E C R E T TEHRAN 3055

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, VS

SUBJ: ICCS: IRANIAN WITHDRAWAL PLANS

REF: A. SAIGON 4305 B. STATE 77766 C. SAIGON 4359

1. DCM CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY TAJBAKHSR MORNING APRIL 6 AND CONVEYED SUBSTANCE REFTELS A & B. TAJBAKHSR RESPONDED BY REAFFIRMING GOI'S DESIRE TO PLAY A RESPONSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN VIETNAM THROUGH PARTICIPATION ON ICCS. HE SAID HOWEVER THAT TURN OF EVENTS HAS MADE THIS IMPOSSIBLE AND GOI'S MAIN CONCERN NOW IS FOR SAFETY OF ITS PERSONNEL. ACCORDINGLY, SHAH HAD ORDERED IRANIAN AIR FORCE PLANE TO PROCEED TO SAIGON TO EVACUATE IRANIAN ICCS DELEGATION. FLIGHT HAD BEEN CANCELLED AT LAST MINUTE WHEN GOI HEARD NEWS OF TRAGIC C-5 ORPHAN EVACUATION CRASH. SINCE, MANY STORIES AROUND ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF SABOTAGE BEING INVOLVED, GOI DID NOT WANT TO RUN THE RISK OF SAME THING HAPPENING TO ITS MILITARY AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING, 100 SEATS HAD BEEN RESERVED ON AIR FRANCE COMMERCIAL FLIGHT TO EVACUATE "AS MANY AS POSSIBLE" OF THE IRANIAN ICCS DELEGATION WITHIN NEXT DAYS.

2. WHEN PRESSED TO CONSIDER LEAVING ENOUGH PERSONNEL TO MAN ITS DELEGATION AND KEY SECRETARIAT POSTIONS WHICH WE ESTIMATE WOULD
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REQUIRE ABOUT 20 PEOPLE, TAJBAKHSR EQUIVOCATED, SAYING AT ONE

POINT THAT NO FIRM DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED ABOUT HOW MANY OFFICERS TO LEAVE BEHIND AND NUMBER MIGHT BE 5 OR 10 OR 15. AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE CONVERSATION HE SAID THAT IRAN WAS FOLLOWING INDO-NESEAN LEAD AND THAT INDONESIANS WERE WITHDRAWING ALL BUT FIVE MILITARY OFFICERS. LATER HE SAID THAT IRAN WAS CUTTING THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF ITS DELEGATION FROM 7 TO 3 AND ITS MILITARY DELEGATION DOWN TO 5 OR 6. OUR BEST GUESS IS THAT ACTUAL INSTRUCTIONS TO IRANIAN DELEGATION IS TO GET AS MANY OF ITS PEOPLE OUT AS POSSIBLE AND PLAY IT BY EAR, RE REMAINING MINIMUM NUMBER (PROBABLY ABOUT 8) AS SITUATION DEVELOPS.

3. STRESSING GOI'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS PEOPLE, TAJBAKSHS ASKED WHETHER USG PREPARED TO GUARANTEE SAFETY OF IRANIAN PERSONNEL SHOULD GOI ACQUIESCE TO US PLEA THAT APPROXIMATELY 20 IRANIANS REMAIN AT THEIR STATIONS IN SAIGON. DCM SAID IT OBVIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE FUTURE BUT THAT IT OUR BEST JUDGMENT AT THE MOMENT THAT ICCS PERSONNEL IN SAIGON ARE IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER.

4. TAJBAKSHS WAS OBVIOUSLY UNCONVINCED AND SAID THAT GOI HAD RECEIVED FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES ESTIMATE THAT HANOI HAD DECIDED TO GO FOR BROKE AND THAT SAIGON WOULD BE IN COMMUNIST HANDS WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS. HE SAID THAT IF WE HAD DIFFERENT EVALUATION AND SUPPORTING DETAIL, THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY BEAR ON EVOLVING GOI DECISIONS ABOUT ITS ICCS PERSONNEL. AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE SHAH 12 NOON, APRIL 7 (TEHRAN TIME). IF SAIGON OR DEPARTMENT HAS RELEVANT INFORMATION WHICH WOULD BE OF VALUE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO GOI TO MAINTAIN MINIMUM ICCS PRESENCE IN VIETNAM, PLEASE PROVIDE IMMEDIATELY.

HELMS

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